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The Christmas Answer

CHRISTMAS takes so great a place in our thought today that we cannot help wondering why the Church waited so long—nearly three centuries—before putting the Feast upon the calendar of Holy Days. It was not because the stories in the Gospels were not familiar. It could be only because in some fashion no urgent need called for the answer which Christmas could give. Other ranges of thought dominated the Church. Put in somewhat exaggerated phrases, one might say that during those centuries most Christians were so confident of the living presence of the victorious Lord, so sure of the guidance of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the congregation of the faithful, and in spite of the unfulfilled “promise of his coming,” so deeply concerned with that promise of the future that the celebration of a birthday seemed to answer no special need. With eyes on the future, why commemorate the past? Dazzled by the vision of the Divine Word, which through the ages had lighted every man and now in Jesus Christ flooded the world with the “Brightness of the immortal Father’s face,” waiting in faith for the victory of that eternal word, these men deemed the present and the future to be enough.

But the mood changed when the Empire was conquered and the Church discovered that in its victory it faced the hard reality of a society nominally Christian but still half pagan. The most elementary education in bare Christian morality, to say nothing of the high things of the spirit, became an absolute essential. The Christ, no longer living in spirit-filled hearts, must be made alive. His birth, his childhood, his mother, all the things which made him intelligible to these children in the Gospel, became of importance. Christmas, as one of them, answered a need. It was part of the historical process which unfortunately more and more channeled the gift of the Spirit through priest and bishop, and more and more found the presence of the Living Lord only where the eye could see him, the tongue taste him in the consecrated host. Its celebration was one of the factors which made the Lord real, close, understandable, touching the life of the common man.

One sees the same principle of need working in

some of the Protestant groups after the Reformation. The repudiation of the Christian Year was of course part of the revolt from its medieval system, but it could never have been so complete had not the essential factors in the faith of these Christians made it unnecessary. They lived under a profound sense of the transcendent power of God with a faith so centered in the Cross as to exclude all other aspects of Christian experience. Like St. Paul, they did not seem to feel the need to know Jesus after the flesh. Christmas has come back to them as a secular holiday which has gradually revealed its deeper meanings only within the last generation or two.

When we come to the present and our own special needs, the great Feast seems to touch us at many points, to answer many of the needs of our troubled world. We do not need to be assured that Jesus is real, but we do need the civilizing power of the child. We need that picture of the home and the Holy Family. We need, in a sorrowing, unsure world, the sense of the permanency of homely things, and the invasion of joy. Perhaps, to drop to a very practical matter, we do well likewise to link the plight of so many of our people in the midst of plenty, with that ancient story of crowded Bethlehem. It was the Lord of life for whom there was no room in the inn. There is a wealth of meaning in the parallel. And we certainly need the message of peace and good will, an eternal message, but desperately relevant, in this same suspicious and tortured world.

One after another the familiar interpretations of this happiest of Christian Holy Days come flooding into our thoughts, and yet instinctively we feel that there is something more. We have not yet, it seems, touched the deepest need nor found its answer. The Holy Family is a lovely picture; the angels’ song is only an echo from heaven of the sighs of millions of stricken hearts and anxious minds. But the song does come from heaven, and perhaps it being Christmas we are not too fanciful to find in that brief phrase what we are seeking.

For clearly our greatest need today is the certainty

of God, the profound conviction that he does rule, that his righteousness and justice and love are imperishable. And here at Christmas, through all its friendly and homely meanings, through the fancies and legends which have gathered round it, there is a deep and searching-note. The heavens open—we seem to hear another voice interpreting the angels' song and the announcement of the Savior's birth. "Listen!" it seems to say, "you do not understand. This child is God's Word to man. In him God speaks. You have tried your own strength; you have built with your own hands; you have trusted your own minds and been driven by your own wills; and where are you? Your world crumbles, your hopes dim, your faith weakens. But now listen! The heavens open. It is God speaking. This Word comes with power, with the authority of eternity. This birth in which God speaks is no mere adventitious happening. It is God speaking. It carries the meaning of life, the secret of the universe. It points the way of salvation. It is God speaking. Here in this Child is the way, the truth, the life. You ignore it at your peril. You repudiate it to your destruction. It is God speaking and him you cannot escape."

Christmas will bring many kinds of messages to many kinds of people throughout the world. It will answer in some fashion for an hour, a day or a week some deep need. But all those needs only point to the deepest need of all: the craving of the human heart for God, for the authority of eternal things. In this tragic, troubled, unsure world, on Christmas Day the heavens did open and God spoke.

E. L. P.

Editorial Notes

The New British Weekly, an independent journal, expresses grave concern over the food situation in Germany and has some pointed criticisms of American policy. It writes: "This is not the place to attempt to predict the consequences of America's change of mood, but some of them will be horrible. The most immediately threatened are the Germans of the British zone, for although the Americans lately agreed to pool food resources of their zone and ours, they are not doing so. Mr. Victor Gollancz wrote from Düsseldorf that many thousands there, and also in Hamburg, are suffering from 'hunger oedema,' and that other deficiency diseases are also rampant. This gives an unpleasant overtone to our Food Minister's assurance that Britain is now consuming more stable foods than before the war, and to his promise of extra Christmas rations. . . . If our government will not even sanction the send-

ing of food parcels by individuals to Germany, who are we to complain upon grounds of conscience and humanity of America's ruthless lapse into *laissez faire*."

The journal continues by suggesting that for America to "assume planetary guidance upon the basis of outmoded economic anarchy" would be to add to the world's confusion. Such criticisms prove that British and European apprehensions about American policy are by no means confined to the left.

What is disturbing about this criticism, however, is that we are made the scapegoat for the British uneasiness of conscience in regard to hunger in Germany. There is too great a disposition on the part of American liberals to hold British "colonialism" responsible for all the ills of the world, and for British liberals to detect American economic imperialism in every evil.

Whatever may be the faults of American policy (and we are not disposed to deny them) the situation in Germany is not immediately caused by any peculiar or unique American policy. We do not know whether American authorities have refused to pool the food resources of the two zones. We do know that the food deficit in the British zone is only slightly higher than in ours. Neither zone is capable of feeding its population if it is not allowed to export manufactured goods to pay for food imports. The trickle of charity, which enters both zones, is bound to be inadequate in any event. Both governments are equally responsible in allowing a situation of complete economic stagnation, which will result in the direst consequences before the winter is over. We are still bargaining with the Russians, who want 25% of all German production, as the price of the economic unification of Germany. If that price is paid, export balances will not be great enough to buy the necessary food. In any event, the Western powers will have to be ready to permit German manufactured goods to come into our markets, if the food is to be bought. And there are indications that British interests are as afraid of German competition as we are.

Whatever criticisms we make of each other, let us not evade common responsibilities by these mutual recriminations. Neither one of us has done a good enough job as an occupying power to be able to afford such criticisms. We both evict German families with equal ruthlessness to make room for the families of our officers. Being wealthier than Britain, our responsibilities are greater; but neither of us has approximated a decent justice in dealing with a vanquished foe.

R. N.

What Four Men Found in Bethlehem

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

IS it a page out of far off history not written down before? Or is it a legend? Or is it only a dream?

Who can tell? Yet, nevertheless, here is the story.

On the night when the little child of Mary was born in the stable in Bethlehem, there were many other persons in the town, and among them three particular ones of whom we shall hear at this new Christmas-time. They were in the inn when Mary and Joseph could not gain admittance. They slept within the sheltering walls while the Christ-child was born in the stable. They knew nothing of the brightness of angels in the sky. They heard nothing of shepherds, who on the plains of Bethlehem, heard an angel's voice, and hurried to the stable to see the little child in Mary's arms. They only slept unknowing, and one by one the next morning they rose indifferently to start upon their homeward way.

But as they set out together on the road that led down from the hill of Bethlehem to the Judaean plain, it happened that they drew together; and they talked to one another and asked what had brought them there.

The first of them was a Roman centurion whose name was Marius, who rode upon his horse. And this is what he said:

"I came to Bethlehem with a detachment of legionaries to guard the town during the enrollment and the taxing, and I came also for another particular reason of my own. I know the man who has bought the privilege of collecting Caesar's taxes here in Bethlehem. I have done business with this Jacob Ben Israel before. I said to him that it was plainly to his good that Roman soldiers at my command should be here to watch against thieves, and to keep the town in order while he gathered in his revenue. He was a wise man, and he understood. And so I come away from Bethlehem"—and here he touched his girdle—"with these hundred silver denarii which I can use to good advantage. I shall enlarge and adorn the courtyard of the house I am building for myself in Caesarea. My visit to Bethlehem has worked out well."

The second was a sheikh who dwelt in his wide tents on the plains of the Shephelah. His name was Ilbrahim; and as he rode on his camel, thus said he:

"There is a market-place in Bethlehem where many sheep are sold on the days when crowds come into the town. There are those in Bethlehem who have charge of the market-place, and there was need of a little private converse between them and me. So I came upon my camel hither to talk with them.

Hereafter my sheep will be given room in the market before the flocks of any others who have sheep to sell. It is true I had to cross their palms with money; but the money I have paid will come back to me many times over in the days ahead." He laughed. "This journey to Bethlehem will mean much profit, and I am satisfied."

Then spoke the third, a rich man of Jerusalem whose name was Hazor, who rode upon a mule richly caparisoned.

"An old friend of mine in Bethlehem lives in the one great house of the town," said he. "Once in every year he gives a feast to all his acquaintances, and I came to his feast last night. Such a banquet as it was! There were cakes made from the finest flour that is grown upon the Judaean plains, the flesh of lambs, fish from the Sea of Galilee, pomegranates and dates and other fruit from the gardens of Damascus, and wine from the vineyards of Lebanon. Such a feast Caesar himself might have envied. It was worth more than a journey from Jerusalem."

Then as the three rode together, they became aware of a shepherd lad who had been walking in the field beside them, keeping pace with them as they made their slow way down the hill, and gazing at their faces.

They stopped and looked at him.

"What mean you by walking there and staring at us?" said Marius.

"Forgive me, my masters," said the lad. "I have heard what you were saying, and I wondered."

"Wondered at what?" said Ilbrahim.

"Wondered whether there was not more that you saw and found in Bethlehem," said the shepherd. "Did you see last night a shining in the sky?"

"Not I," said Marius. "I slept sound in the inn with a hundred good denarii to keep me company."

"Nor I," said Ilbrahim, "I too slept, and my dreams were opulent."

"I saw nothing but the lights of the banquet hall where the wine flowed. Those were lights enough for me," said Hazor.

"And did you hear no tidings of a Child that was born?" said the shepherd.

They looked at one another in amazement, and they laughed.

"Who cares for nonsense such as this?" said Marius. "Every moment somewhere a child is born. What concern is it of mine if there is another more or less in Bethlehem? I came to teach Jacob Ben Israel how to be generous. He learned his lesson well, and I am going away with all that I wanted to get in Bethlehem."

"I have made my arrangements in the market-

place, and that will suffice for me," said Ilbrahim.

"I have had my feast, and that will be enough to dream on for many days to come," said Hazor.

Then as they went their way along the road the shepherd stood and looked after them. For a long time he gazed. And then his eyes lifted, and he looked at the sky and at the rim of the far-off hills. Slowly in his face a light began to glow, as though some inward flame were burning. Then softly he began to sing.

"At the end will be but rust,
Where earthly treasures are;
They whose eyes are in the dust
Will never see a star.
They who came to Bethlehem
And only dross have sought
Will take away alone with them
The emptiness they brought."

He stopped, and was silent while still his eyes were wide. Then he began again to speak, as though in the quiet field there were something which would hear.

"They think that they carry power and wealth and honor with them where they go; but it is not true. For the world will not be made better by the craft and violence of Rome, nor by the greed of merchants, nor by the indulgence of the rich. Surely the truth rather is in what I heard last night in the vision of the angels, and in what I saw as I knelt there by the manger in the stable in Bethlehem. Love was there. I saw it shining in the mother's face. It has come in some strange new way of wonder to our world in the Child who is called 'the Saviour.' The three men yonder who have found all they sought in Bethlehem will go on their way and be forgotten. But only those who shall learn in Bethlehem the meaning of love will be redeemed."

Deeper Issues in the Coal Strike

LISTON POPE

THE capitulation of John L. Lewis represented a postponement rather than a solution of the basic issues involved in the coal strike. But such respite an economy that was rapidly being brought to its knees may be temporarily restored. But the chaos in American-industrial relations will continue until some of the fundamental questions are faced rather than skirted.

The dispute between the government and Mr. Lewis posed several important legal questions, and had interesting political implications. On the legal side, there is the question as to the right of the government to secure an injunction against the strike in the face of the Norris-La Guardia Act, which forbade Federal Courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes, and made no explicit exception of the government in this connection. It should be remembered that Mr. Truman did not believe last May that he had the authority to follow the procedure recently employed against Mr. Lewis; in his speech to Congress during the railroad crisis he requested new legislation to authorize precisely such steps. Congress refused to grant his request, but the President has followed the procedure anyhow. There are good grounds for suspecting that the government has a weak legal case, despite the report that the Supreme Court will probably uphold the ruling of the Lower Court in favor of the government.

From one standpoint, this is a purely legal question, and the courts must decide whether the affirmative view of the Attorney General, or the negative opinion of the lawyers for the union is correct. But

problems greater than those of the recent crisis are involved—namely, whether government is superior as sovereign to the laws it has made, and whether government as an employer should have power deemed inappropriate for private employers, and to what degree if any. Government has a greater responsibility to the total society than private employers have, and presumably should have power commensurate with its responsibility. How can such powers be granted without investing government with the role of strike breaker in every important dispute, and without making it in effect a sponsor of involuntary servitude?

Further, if government has the right to secure an injunction against a threatened strike, by what methods can the injunction be made valid practically as well as legally? In Pittsburgh a few weeks ago the leader of a power workers' strike was thrown into jail for contempt of court, because he ignored an injunction obtained by the mayor, only to be released a few days later, because he alone could modify the actual situation in Pittsburgh, and his imprisonment had only served to strengthen the strike. The prestige of the courts is not enhanced by steps which may be legal, but are impossible to enforce.

No formula for compulsory prohibition of a strike by a major union is immediately available, and it is doubtful that one can be devised within a democratic framework of opinion and of government. The imprisonment of a union leader, or the imposition of a heavy fine against him, or the union, will not often stop a strike; the total effect will ordinarily be to

the contrary. The use of troops in the coal fields will be equally futile—the very suggestion that they be used, to protect miners who might wish to work, betrayed a remarkable naiveté concerning the solidarity of the miners' union.

On the political side, the fight between Mr. Lewis and the Truman administration has its tragicomic aspects. With a sharp eye toward the 1948 elections, Republican leadership is undoubtedly enjoying Mr. Truman's latest loss of labor support, especially in view of the fact that the new Republican Congress is not yet involved in responsibility. The fact that Mr. Lewis has been the chief Republican stalwart in labor circles for many years (except in 1936, when he joined most of his fellow Republicans in deserting the party) should not be forgotten.

There are other issues that are of far deeper import than the immediate legal and political questions, though they have been hinted at in discussion of these questions. One such issue concerns the right of any group to imperil the economy of the nation—and, to a significant degree, to retard the recovery of economies elsewhere, if not actually to starve innumerable people. The obvious answer is that no group—whether meat growers or coal miners—can be sustained in any such right. Democracy does not grant the right to pursue group interest without regard for wider consequences, or to pursue group interest without restraint, even if this interest is coincidental in some respects with the total welfare. An unlimited right of this sort can be entertained only within the framework of anarchy, or of a totalitarianism which sets one particular group free to exploit all others without restraint.

A second fundamental issue concerns the right of a democratic government to coerce a great mass of its citizens, and to compel them to work against their will under conditions of which they do not approve. To be sure, the miners are not relatively disadvantaged at the moment in pay rates, or total income, or hours of labor, as compared with other workers. They are comparatively in worse situation with respect to living and working conditions, particularly housing and industrial accidents. But whatever the validity of their grounds, the simple fact remains that the miners have elected, unanimously, to accept Mr. Lewis' cue for a strike. During fifty-six years of struggle in a rough-and-tumble industry, the United Mine Workers has taught its members in performance, as well as in theory, that their only reliable defense lies in union solidarity. The very character of the industry has helped to make the union a kind of super-government for its members, so far as their relations with the industry itself are concerned.

It is doubtful that the right of a democratic government to compel citizens to work against their will can be justified, except under dangers so imminent

and catastrophic that the very existence of the democracy is immediately threatened, and no solution except compulsory labor is available. An analogy between military conscription and compulsion of industrial workers would be weak at many points; the danger of complete disaster is not so imminent as in wartime, nor is compulsion an effective method of meeting strikes.

A solution to the perennial difficulties between Mr. Lewis and the government must go deeper than a temporary compromise, or the determination of nice legal points. A long-range and basic program would require that the responsibility of the government, for the production of coal, should be matched by ownership by the government of the facilities for producing coal, in order that the conditions which breed discontent and give Mr. Lewis his power could be dealt with at the sources. In effect, the government has been operating the coal mines since last May without adequate authority to discharge its responsibility effectively. Basic ownership of the mines has remained in private hands, to which the government has been required to make an accounting. The government assumed authority to meet ephemeral demands of the miners' union without assuming authority to reorganize the coal industry in such fashion that subsequent demands—and Mr. Lewis' pugnacity in prosecution of them—might be mitigated. The government has really been a personnel manager rather than the owner of the business, and its role has been superficial. It has at last degenerated into an attempt simply to maintain the status quo in the industry.

It is fatuous to expect that a Republican Congress which is already pledged to "take government out of business" will approve nationalization of the coal industry. The new congress is far more likely to search for a repressive formula for control of union leadership and compulsion of workers. Some types of labor legislation, such as authority for government agencies to investigate and publish all relevant facts in a dispute (including a "look at the company's books"), are long overdue. The establishment of a system of labor courts, the strengthening of the government's mediation service, the regularization of national and regional labor-management conferences—all such devices for promoting consultation and facilitating adjudication would help to lessen industrial strife. Management and the unions might also be encouraged to experiment with systems of grievance machinery, group incentive plans, and annual wage schemes which have already proved their worth. Contracts in industries might be written on a regional basis with different dates of expiration, to the advantage of the union as well as to total economy.

But a higher order of industrial statesmanship than has yet been displayed by either the Democrats

or the Republicans must emerge before such fundamental procedures are adopted. Meanwhile, despite temporary settlements and abortive legislation, we can expect crisis after crisis in American industrial relations, to the distress of real lovers of freedom and the comfort of extreme radicals and reactionaries.

Communication

One of our readers, stationed with U. S. occupying forces in Germany, makes the following comment on our recent article on Germany which appeared in the October 14th issue:

"I was powerfully impressed by Dr. Niebuhr's article on the occupation, for it is an extremely clear and lucid one. He had precise reactions, definite opinions. But it takes more than lucidity to make a decent article. What is most important is his view of the question—dispassionate, free from prejudice, with the sole purpose of presenting a thoughtful Christian analysis of the Germans of today. 'Nothing is spared to make the American soldier, and more particularly an officer, comfortable. And little is done to make the almost intolerable lot of over-crowded Germans a little easier.' Quite a justified criticism; in fact, any sympathy for or kindness toward the Germans, individually or as a nation, is regarded as a sure sign that the individual has fallen prey to the remnants of Goebbel's propaganda. It seems to be the usual attitude that our contempt and hate for Naziism should be expressed by callousness. I believe that, in addition to its obvious harm

to the Germans, this attitude on the part of Americans is a sort of moral atrophy. Of course, his remarks on the church were interesting. I have yet to meet a German who: (1) did not have quite thorough religious education in his childhood; and (2) does not observe the outward religious forms almost with mania. Bavaria is predominantly Catholic; and, especially in the farm regions, no house is complete without an outdoor shrine or statue. Yet, with this dogged retention of their ancestral faith, the Germans became criminals. But is this not indicative of world-wide decay, rather than purely Teutonic decline? The German church was not suffering from a malady defined by boundaries; its weakness was the universal weakness of all churches, and the universal immorality of men who pay only lip service to their God. This unique occupation, still at times remarkably like an experiment, demands not only political astuteness, but sympathy and a firm sense of impartial justice. I have no patience with that type of soldier (alas! all too frequent) who says, 'They started this war; if they are starving or freezing now it is only their repayment.' Nonsense; I want no part of a system that balances German barbarism by allied cruelty; that atones for Dachau by starving and dispiriting an entire nation. The only system which can hope for eventual peace and good will in Germany, is some scheme which extends to the Germans a cautious, but firm and sincere, hand of help and comfort. So long as we play power politics here instead of trying to rebuild, so long will we commit a crime of much more far-reaching consequence than Dachau."

The World Church: News and Notes

Relief Agencies Appeal For Speedup of Supplies

An appeal for relief supplies to stave off "a new and terrible catastrophe that threatens millions of starving people" in Europe was issued from Geneva by leading Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish organizations.

Groups sponsoring the appeal were the World Council of Churches; Caritas, international Catholic welfare agency; the Union of OSE (Oeuvre de Secours des Enfants—Children's Aid Project) Societies; the International Red Cross; the International Center for Relief to Civilian Populations; and the Save the Children's Union.

Declaring that masses of people in the war-stricken countries are "without shelter, wretchedly clad, and have little resistance to disease and epidemics," the appeal warned that they will be "quite incapable of winning through the coming winter unless they receive substantial help and relief from abroad."

"The harvest of 1946," the joint statement said, "has helped to improve the food situation in the devastated countries of Europe and Asia, but reserve stocks will soon run out. To the homeless, living amidst ruins, have now been added entire populations transferred from their homes. . . . Hundreds of thousands of sick are waiting and hoping for medical aid."

Immediate needs, the statement declared, are bread-stuffs, fats, medical supplies, clothing, shoes, and "large sums of money."

"Having witnessed the harrowing effects of ceaselessly increasing distress and received a constant stream of desperate appeals for help," the signatories declared "we must again voice our deep anxieties and call upon the conscience of all to contribute."

"The time is short. It is incumbent on all to give as far as their means allow and to send contributions to any recognized national or international relief organization of their choice, whose aim is to help all victims in need." (RNS)

Missionaries Returning to Their Fields in Large Number

The greatest mass sailing of missionaries in the history of the Protestant Church in America took place this month when the S.S. Marine Lynx and the S.S. Marine Falcon departed from San Francisco with approximately 900 missionaries on board. The sailings were arranged under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and the American President Lines.

The Marine Lynx left the Pacific Coast on December 15, carrying approximately 670 missionaries destined for Manila, Shanghai and Hong Kong. An emergency class non-reconverted troop ship, the Lynx transported 400 missionaries to the same ports of call last October.

The Marine Falcon left San Francisco on December 21 for Singapore, Madras and Bombay, with 250 missionaries on its passenger list. The transport has been reconditioned to accommodate cabin-class passengers.

A farewell meeting in honor of the missionaries was held in the Oakland Auditorium, Oakland, Calif., December 8, under the sponsorship of the Oakland Council of Churches.

A third sailing is planned for the Marine Lynx early in 1947, according to the Foreign Missions Conference.

World Council to Receive Gift From Brazil Methodists

Brazil Methodists are expected to send a gift to the World Council of Churches' Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid sometime in December, Dr. J. Hutchinson Cockburn, department director, announced. This will be the first time that aid has been received from any Protestant church body in South America.

Indications are that the offering from Brazil will be sent by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Rio de Janeiro, thus associating most Protestant denominations in the area with the contribution to the Methodist group.

It is expected that part of the gift will be used for general relief in Europe, and the remainder for needs of war-affected Methodist congregations. (RNS)

Europe's Moral Damage Exceeds Physical Destruction

"The moral damage which Europe has suffered exceeds the physical destruction, and is far more difficult to repair," Dr. Howard E. Kershner, Vice-Chairman of Save the Children Federation, declared on his recent arrival in New York City, after four months spent in seven countries of Europe (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France and Switzerland).

Dr. Kershner went to Europe to survey the operation of the Federation's child and school sponsorship program, which is being conducted in several of the countries visited and to report on existing needs.

"A return to active, sincere religion is needed to restore integrity and the high ideals of a lost civilization," Dr. Kershner stated. "Much more must be done

to revive a crippled educational system and to restore philosophy, literature, and art. In the face of handicaps that must be experienced to be appreciated, and contending with hardships that discourage all but the toughest, the people of Europe, in general, are working with courage and intelligence to overcome their suffering.

"Selective relief for children who need it is the greatest need in western and northern Europe today and should be continued for several years. The acute crisis in western and northern Europe has passed, but the long, bitter struggle against cold, undernourishment, lack of housing and clothing will continue for many years.

"Last year at this time, I came home with a dramatic story of tragedy. This year I am happy to report much improvement, but the first enthusiasm of liberation is gone and the people of Europe now realize in the cold, grey light of reality that they are faced with years of toil and bitter hardship if they are to succeed in rehousing themselves, restoring their economy and getting back to what one might call liveable conditions."

The Save the Children Federation has found sponsors for more than one thousand schools in France, Holland, Belgium and Norway, in which some thirty to fifty thousand children are receiving help, and is also assisting in these countries and among war refugees in Sweden, over 3,000 individual children for whom personal sponsors have been found in America. Recently the Federation has undertaken a small relief program in Finland where, according to Dr. Kershner, the suffering is more acute than anywhere else in western or northern Europe.

"Aside from Finland, Italy and Central Europe," Dr. Kershner reported, "there is, in general, enough food for a minimum standard of existence. Prices, however, are very high, and the low income groups are not properly nourished. A whole generation of children is subnormal in size, weight and energy. Millions of these children are not going to school in bad weather because they do not have sufficient clothing or shoes. Millions also are going to school in barracks, temporary buildings, or crowded in with other children in schools that are still standing."

"Norway has accomplished the greatest measure of recovery and is closely followed by Belgium. There is more food in Holland, but that country was so stripped of all moveable goods, that but little progress has been made towards restoring housing, and household and industrial equipment. Mounting debt in all countries, especially in France, remains an unsolved problem. Finland struggles with an enormous indemnity payable to Russia which takes practically all of her foreign exchange. All other countries are able to import quantities of materials for the reviving of their industrial life, but Finland, after sending to Russia a great part of her output, must live on what is left of her own resources."

Church Leaders to Attend World Council Evangelism Conference

Church leaders in many countries have been invited to a Conference on Evangelism to be held in Geneva next February under the auspices of the Department

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of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches. Leading countries represented will be the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland.

The conference will be preparatory to the meeting of secretaries of church reconstruction committees in various parts of the world scheduled for March. Plans for carrying on evangelizing work among the unchurched will be discussed at the March meeting, and all secretaries have been instructed to prepare reports on new methods of evangelism in their countries and results obtained.

One expected outcome of the February conference, according to Dr. J. Hutchison Cockburn, director of the Reconstruction Department, will be the compilation of a report on "how Christianity can best be spread in European and other countries." (RNS)

Protestant Agencies Map

Joint Work for DPs

Three international Protestant organizations have entered into an agreement for cooperative efforts to bring religious ministry to displaced persons in Germany. The three groups are: the World's YMCA, the World's YWCA, and the Ecumenical Relief Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Under the agreement, the YMCA and the YWCA, which have been authorized by UNRRA to provide spiritual aid to DPs, may secure personnel for this work from churches affiliated with the World Council. Personnel will be on Y staffs, but will also administer aid on behalf of the World Council, and will wear badges signifying their dual responsibility.

Salaries and cars will be provided by the World Council or other church bodies, but the Ys will provide workers with food, lodging, clothing, and uniforms.

Staff members will keep in touch with religious leaders in the DP camps, provide literature and other material, and arrange institutes and training courses for persons interested in the spiritual life of the camps.

The Y workers will keep headquarters posted on all religious matters affecting the camps. Where the need and opportunity exists, they will be authorized to supervise the distribution of material relief in the form of food, clothing and other necessities to Protestant and Orthodox DPs. (RNS)

Russian Orthodox Leaders in Jerusalem

The arrival in Jerusalem of Metropolitan Gregorii of Leningrad has stimulated rumors that the Moscow Patriarchate has opened negotiations with British authorities for transfer of church property now in the hands of Russian Orthodox dissidents. Metropolitan Gregorii is the first high-ranking Russian churchman to visit Jerusalem since the tour of Moscow Patriarch Alexei in 1945.

Russian Orthodox property in the Holy Land, valued at about \$4,000,000, was controlled by the Czarist government prior to the Revolution of 1917, but subsequently remained in possession of local Orthodox leaders, who have consistently refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate outside Russia.

Metropolitan Gregorii was accompanied by Archpresbyter Nikolai Federovich Kolchitsky, manager of affairs for the Moscow Patriarchate. Announced purpose of their visit was to arrange facilities for Russian Orthodox pilgrims at religious shrines in the Holy Land.

The Leningrad prelate was welcomed by Greek Patriarch Timothy of Jerusalem and other Greek Orthodox leaders, but there was a conspicuous absence of Russian priests among those on hand to greet him. One of his first acts was to celebrate a Mass in the Greek chapel of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and later he visited Bethlehem and other religious sites, in company with Archpresbyter Kolchitsky.

It was recalled that a similar lack of response from the Russian clergy was noted when Patriarch Alexei visited Jerusalem. The Moscow Patriarch was received by two Greek Patriarchs and many Greek priests, and visited Greek, Bulgarian, Ethiopian, and Arab Orthodox churches, but according to reports, not one Russian church or school.

Metropolitan Gregorii's visit has stimulated agitation among Arab Orthodox clergy and laity in Jerusalem for Russian intervention to bring about a change in Greek church tradition and administration which would permit inclusion of Arabs among the hierarchy, now limited entirely to Greek-born churchmen. (RNS)

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